



## SENIOR HEALTH

# Divorce

## TIPS FOR COPING



The grief that accompanies divorce is both emotionally and physically stressful. Leaving behind a familiar way of life can be frightening. But time and taking care of yourself will help with the transition.

- Once the shock and numbness wear off be prepared to feel anger, hurt, hopelessness and despair. During this time, friends, relatives, therapists and support groups can offer you much support. Don't cut yourself off from the world.
- The silence of nighttime can be the worst. Get some noise going, such as a radio, a fan or the television.
- If you feel helpless, go for a drive. Driving is an excellent way to feel in control.
- Try new activities outside of work or your usual routine. New things take a lot of concentration and can help take your mind off your problems. Avoid waking up in the morning with nothing to do and no one to see. Get tickets for a ball game or the theater or visit a friend.
- Take care of your body. Exercise and eat a well-balanced diet. Although the tendency may be to drink and smoke to excess, it won't help. Enjoy long baths, take walks to clear your head and invigorate your mood.
- Recognize that your feelings of loneliness, frustration and fear are normal. Find constructive and safe ways to vent your feelings. (Pull weeds out of your garden, throw baseballs at a fence or scream when you're alone in your car.)
- Try to avoid power struggles with your former spouse. If a discussion starts turning into a fight, calmly suggest that the conversation be tried again later, then walk away or hang up.
- Take time to explore and get to know who you are apart from your former spouse. Have you always wanted to take up bowling or painting? Sign up for a class, volunteer for local organizations and take time to enjoy your life.
- Remember that divorce is a grieving process. Even if the marriage was unhealthy or harmful, venturing into the unknown is frightening.